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7. — *The Holy Roman Empire.* By JAMES BRYCE, D. C. L., Fellow of Oriel College and Professor of Civil Law in the University of Oxford. Third edition revised. London : Macmillan & Co. 1871. 12mo. pp. 424.

WHEN Guizot is enumerating and describing the elements of society which existed at the commencement of the sixth century, he says that the Empire had bequeathed two things to the modern world,—the municipalities, and “the idea of the Empire, the name of Emperor, the idea of imperial majesty, of an absolute, sacred power attached to the name of Emperor.” This is all he has to say in regard to the Empire. It is extinct, a memory of it survives, and in imitation of it Charlemagne establishes his new empire in the eighth century. Probably all readers of these lectures have felt that something is wanting here ; that the Roman Empire played a larger part in modern civilization than would be gathered from Guizot’s words ; that it was more than a mere memory or idea. But the analysis of this element was left for other hands. In English literature the great work of Sir Francis Palgrave, the “History of England and Normandy,” stands perhaps alone in boldness and breadth of treatment in this difficult and disputed field of historical activity ; but Sir Francis left an unfinished work, which few Americans have ever had patience to study. Mr. Freeman promises at some future time to take up the same subject, and if he carries out his pledge, the work will be done with faithfulness and very decided ability. But as yet little has been accomplished by English hands towards clearing away the thick veil of darkness which obscures early German history, as seen from an English stand-point. The Germans, on the other hand, remarkable as they are for success in dealing with all periods of history they touch, have excelled themselves in regard to their own. The wealth of their literature in this direction is alarming to the foreigner who gains even a distant view of it. Their collections of original authorities alone are rapidly extending to the infinite. Their studies of the institutions of their ancestors are innumerable, and yet the subject is very far indeed from receiving its final shape. Few or none of these German works have been thought worthy of translation. Even Giesebrecht, whose History of the German Empire may, when measured by a German standard, be called a popular book, has as yet found no English interpreter ; and if this is the case with an author so widely known as Giesebrecht, there is little prospect that special students like Waitz, or eccentric geniuses like Gfrörer, will ever be brought before an English audience. Mr. Bryce’s little book comes, therefore, to supply an

immense void in English literature, and has received a hearty welcome accordingly.

"Strange," says Sir Francis Palgrave, "that historians should have encouraged each other in the error that the Roman Empire, extinguished, as they say, in Augustulus, was now (under Charlemagne) restored. Restored!—never had it been suspended, either in principles, maxims, or feelings. The shattered, pillaged, dilapidated Empire was still one state, one community; the nations of Christendom were bound together by one common faith. Distracted Christendom fell miserably short in practice, nevertheless the idea of religious unity was firmly inherent. . . . Moreover, Christendom had to dread a rival empire,—the empire of Islam, under one chief, one caliph, uniting temporal and spiritual authority; and was not one emperor equally needed for Christendom? Hence Charlemagne's call: *Ne Pagani insultarent Christianis si Imperatoris nomen apud Christianos cessasset.*"

The Empire was never divided and never extinct. The crowning of Charlemagne was not, in the eyes of contemporaries, the establishment of a new empire, not even the revival of the extinct empire of the West; but a restoration to its lawful seat of the Roman Empire, which had for centuries been in exile, and had now been disgraced by the heresy of the Isaurian dynasty and the murderous usurpation of Irene.

Rome, to the people of the Middle Ages, was by right the capital of the world, the head of both the political and the religious system of Europe; a notion that we have seen lately reappear in the protest of some American Catholics against its incorporation with the Kingdom of Italy, on this very ground. From the mediæval point of view, this claim is a perfectly just one; and in the chapter on the "Theory of the Mediæval Empire," Mr. Bryce gives a very striking and instructive view of the relations between the Popes and the Emperors, the two co-ordinate heads of Christendom. "The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire are one and the same thing in two aspects; and Catholicism, the principle of the universal Christian society, is also Romanism, that is, rests upon Rome as the origin and type of its universality; manifesting itself in a mystic dualism which corresponds to the two natures of its founder. As divine and eternal, its head is the Pope, to whom souls have been intrusted; as human and temporal, the Emperor, commissioned to rule men's bodies and acts" (p. 106). It follows necessarily that "opposition between two servants of the same king is inconceivable, each being bound to aid and foster the other; the co-operation of both being needed in all that con-

cerns the welfare of Christendom at large." This is the theory; how wildly it disregarded realities is shown by the fact that more than half of Christendom was shut out from the organization, recognizing neither the Pope of Rome as the head of the Church, nor the Western Emperor as the head of the Empire. Nay, how completely the sovereignty of Rome was forgotten in the East is illustrated by the claim of Solyman the Magnificent, that he, in virtue of his possession of Constantinople, was the legitimate successor of Augustus and Constantine, not Maximilian or Charles.

We have not space to follow Mr. Bryce's admirable sketch of the manner in which the Holy Roman Empire was, in fact, if not in name, transformed into a German Empire, — a discussion perhaps even more striking than that already spoken of. The decisive moment of this transformation he places at the reign of Maximilian I., when the house of Hapsburg acquired that permanent leadership in the narrowed empire, which Germany had obtained five hundred years earlier in the Roman Empire. The change was naturally a gradual and unrecognized one. There was no time indeed when the universal character of the Empire was more distinctly recognized in theory than at this very time, in the contested election at the death of Maximilian, when the candidates were the kings of France, Spain, and England. The tendencies which at last made of the universal Empire a mere Austrian monarchy appear so uncontrollable in Mr. Bryce's analysis of them, that one cannot help wishing that he had considered the question: What would have become of the Empire if Francis I. of France, or still more Henry VIII. of England, had been elected instead of Charles I. of Spain? It was easy for Charles to combine the Spanish with the German monarchy, because a large part of his dominions were in Germany; how would it have been with the insular Henry? Perhaps we may conclude that the result would have been good. The Holy Roman Empire was already an anachronism and an obstacle; perhaps under an English or French emperor its unnaturalness and uselessness would have been sooner seen, and it would have been superseded in Germany by some genuine German constitution.

Another point which Mr. Bryce has failed to discuss, and which would seem to have come directly in his way, is the influence of Roman imperialism, especially as remoulded by Constantine upon the ideas of sovereign power in modern Europe, — transforming the free barbarian kingship into an absolute monarchy by divine right, and infecting the Teutonic aristocracy with the haughty and contemptuous spirit that was the true source of the class distinctions and class struggles of modern times.

We wish also to call attention to one or two expressions less accurate than one should expect from so careful a writer: "Town-life there was none [in Germany] till Henry the Fowler forced his forest-loving people to dwell in fortresses that might repel the Hungarian invaders" (p. 132). Now, to say nothing of old Roman towns like Cologne, Mentz, Worms, and Augsburg, there was no small number of German towns — Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfort, &c. — long, before Henry the Fowler; the towns that he founded, too, — Quedlinburg, Merseburg, &c., — were in his own Duchy of Saxony, in North Germany, and therefore on the Slavonian, not the Hungarian, frontier. On p. 223 we find the statement that Frederic III. never entered the Empire for twenty-three years. We do not understand what is meant by this. It is true that Frederic III. let the Empire go, and kept within his own hereditary dominions; but these all belonged to the Empire in the narrowest sense of the term, for Hungary was not yet a part of the Austrian possessions. The Emperor Sigismund, who, as he says, "was virtually a Hungarian king," was the only emperor of the whole long line who can be said to have lived mostly "without the Empire's bounds"; and even he spent much of his reign in Bohemia, an integral part of Germany. Again, we think it is hardly correct to say (p. 309) that the inducement with "those who chose Maximilian emperor" was that "he was the strongest of the German princes," and so best able to sustain the dignity. This was, it is true, the actual result, but it was almost by accident that the Empire fell to the house of Hapsburg, and the great growth of power in that house was after the imperial dignity had become practically hereditary, and indeed largely as a result of the imperial dignity (as Mr. Bryce himself says in a note to p. 184). Albert II., of Austria, was chosen to succeed Sigismund because he was his son-in-law; at his early death his cousin, Frederic III. of Styria, succeeded, as being the head of his family; not by virtue of his power, for he possessed only Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, being at the same time regent of Austria for the infant Ladislaus Posthumus. Maximilian succeeded him as being his son. The whole series of transactions illustrates the constant tendency of the Empire to become hereditary, even in collateral lines.

A note to this third edition (p. 365) explains that a chapter would have been added, treating of the consequences of the war of 1866, but that the sudden outbreak of the war of 1870 made it preferable to defer this discussion until the further changes that will inevitably be made. Meantime we may notice how remarkably the events of the past year illustrate the theories of the book. The temporal power of the Popes was established by the Carolingian kings a little earlier than

the Empire itself. As it came a little earlier than the Empire, so it lasted a little longer. For the period of a thousand years the theory of Church and Empire kept the two institutions in existence long after they had lost all real vitality. The nineteenth century first sees an end put to this mediæval anachronism. Immediately upon the overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope follows the creation of a new Empire, — no inheritance of the dead past, like the Austrian Empire, claiming no connection with Augustus or Charlemagne, like the upstart French Empire, but the expression of the new life of a powerful and at last united nation.

8. — *The Book of God ; A Commentary on the Apocalypse.* London : Trübner & Co. pp. 853.

OUR types are not cabalistic enough to give in full even the title of this most perfect volume of truth, as its author styles it. Truth only, says Bacon, doth judge itself ; and certainly few men have knowledge enough of Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, Runic, Welsh, Tasmanian, and other tongues, to criticise properly a work in which they are all so freely used. It is a pity that such precious matter should be so hard for a common person to understand. If we had not this distinct statement as a guide, we should make a different estimate of the value of this commentary ; but it must be allowed that its truth and its perfection seem to us about on a level. It is rather startling to learn that the Apocalypse was written by Adam, and is now first restored to the correct readings ; that Satan is identical with Napoleon I., and the Beast with the United States ; that the faith of the Jews is diabolical, that of the Romanists a structure of villany and superstition, and that of the Protestants wicked and blasphemous ; and that no doctrine except that set forth by the author is much better. As much bad language is poured on all nations as on all religions ; and it is some salve to our national pride to be told that the British power is ravenous, murderous, and avaricious. It seems that the only true believers are “ pure Gnostics,” and the only sound writer since Adam is Mr. Scott of Ramsgate. Much of the learning of this book is so ingeniously profane as to be unquotable ; and most of the rest needs a “ pure ” Gnostic to interpret it. Those who know anything of the history of that sect can judge how justly the epithet is applied to it, in ancient or modern times ; but it was reserved for the prophet now under consideration to develop the most curious abominations from the most innocent and even sacred writings, and to illustrate them from the antiquities of the East.

Two former volumes, doubtless as true, as pure, as perfect, and as big